



Alexis Hamilton

February 7, 2024

House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

Dear Members,

I am writing in support of House Bill 4124 which provides funds to arts and culture organizations in Oregon. I write as an Oregonian, a consumer of culture, and as an employee of Portland Opera.

As we face increasing turmoil in our personal and public lives, the draining of the public from our public spaces, and the continued dis-ease of folks, despite strong economic forecasts, the arts and culture sector provide pathways through these difficulties.

Our performances and continued presence in downtown locations lure folks into these depopulated, underused sections of town, providing much needed foot traffic to other businesses and reminding audiences of their connections to the city and one another.

Our programming in schools provides invaluable arts education experiences which studies have found increase learning for school children at all levels. Portland Opera To Go, the flagship outreach tool for Portland Opera, which presents high-quality, fully staged, fifty-minute youth operas, goes well beyond the Portland Metro Area to encompass far-flung counties from Malheur to Clatsop to Deschutes and myriad communities in between. We are currently the largest such tour in the entire region. Without us, many children would not be exposed to live performance, let alone opera.

Our arts and culture sector has taken a massive hit in the years since the pandemic. But we are coming back. We need assistance as we recover. I urge your support for House Bill 4124.

Sincerely,
Alexis Hamilton

